

REMARKS

The present amendment is in response to the Office Action dated November 28, 2006. Claims 1-4, and 7-14 are now present in this case. Claims 1-4 and 7-9 have been amended. New claims 12-14 have been added.

Rejection of Claims 1-4, 7-9, and 11 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,488,468 (Peterson et al.)

Claims 1-4, 7-9, and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 4,488,468 issued to Peterson et al. Peterson et al. discloses a storage case (10) designed to house a pedal board (44). Referring to Column 3, lines 53-68 and Figure 3 of Peterson et al., the electronic circuitry is mounted within a housing (50) secured inside the storage case (10). The case (10) includes an aperture (72) (see Figure 4) formed in a bottom wall (14) through which various controls (64, 66, 68, and 70) mounted on the side of housing (50) may be accessed from outside the case (10).

A pedal board (44) and control panel (134) are each connected to the electronic circuitry of the housing (50) by receptacles (60) and (62). Receptacle (60) is adapted to receive a connector plug (94) connected to a cable (92) attached to the pedal board (44) and receptacle (62) is adapted to receive a connector plug (138) of a cable (136) attached to the control panel (134). A power supply cord (56) for the electronic circuitry may extend outside the case (10) through a groove (58) formed in the edge of the bottom wall (14) (see Figure 2). Referring to column 5, lines 55-66 and Figure 9, the control panel (134) is mounted within an L-shaped door (34) attached by hinges (36 and 38) to a front wall (16) of the case (10). However, the control panel (34) may be removed from case (10) and mounted at a remote location. When the door (34) is swung into an open position, the “conventional electronic musical instrument controls” of the control panel (134) may be accessed from outside the case (10).

During pedal board use, the cables (92 and 136) are inserted from the outside of the case (10) into the groove (58) from which the power supply cord (56) extends. Col. 6, lns. 4-12. Consequently, all electrical communication between the interior of the case (10) and exterior electrical components such as the pedal board (44),

an exterior power source, and the control panel (when the door (34) is in an open position) are effected by feeding cords (92, 136, and 56) through the groove (58).

Turning now to amended claim 1 of the application, the Office Action asserts the connector panel of claim 1 is taught by the control panel (134) of Peterson et al. To clarify the difference between these two components, claim 1 has been amended to recite that the connector panel is configured to provide an electrical connection between the at least one piece of rack mounted equipment housed within the interior of the body tube and at least one electrical component that is external to the case when the removable lid is attached to the portion of the first end spaced from the recessed portion.

As described above, the control panel (134) of Peterson et al. provides access to conventional electronic musical instrument controls. The only electrical connection of the control panel (34) (*i.e.*, cable (136) and connector plug (138)) extends from the control panel (34), when the door (34) is open, through the groove (58) and into the interior of the case (10). In other words, the control panel (34) is not configured to effect an electrical connection between two separate electrical components, one being a piece of rack mounted equipment inside the case and the other being electrical component external to the case.

The electrical circuitry of the housing (50) is the only electrical component that arguably connects an external electrical component (the petal board) and an internal electrical component (the control panel). However, the housing (50) is not secured to a recessed portion of the first end of the case (10) as recited by claim 1. Further, the reference discloses opening the door (34) to effect the electrical communication between the petal board and control panel. If the door (34) is closed, as recited in claim 1, the conventional electronic musical instrument controls cannot be accessed and the purpose of the electrical communication between the control panel and the housing (50) is rendered moot.

Consequently, Peterson et al. fails to anticipate the invention of claim 1. Claims 2-4, 7, and 11 depend from claim 1 and are patentable over Peterson et al. for the same reasons claim 1 is patentable over Peterson et al. Claims 2-4, 7, and 11 also recite additional claim elements not present in claim 1 that further distinguish them from

the teachings of Peterson et al. Therefore, applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 2-4, 7, and 11 based on anticipation by Peterson et al.

With respect to independent claim 8, claim 8 recites a connector panel configured to provide an electrical connection between a piece of rack mounted equipment inside the case and an electrical component located outside the case. As explained above with respect to claim 1, Peterson et al. does not disclose a connector panel configured to provide an electrical connection between a piece of rack mounted equipment inside the case and an electrical component located outside the case. Consequently, the Peterson et al. patent fails to anticipate the invention of claim 8 and applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claim 8 as anticipated by Peterson et al. Claim 9 depends from claim 8 and is patentable over Peterson et al. for the same reasons claim 8 is patentable over Peterson et al. Therefore, applicants also respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claim 9 based on anticipation by Peterson et al.

Rejection of Claims 1, 8, 10, and 11 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,482,895 (Becklin)

Claims 1, 8, 10, and 11 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,482,895 to Becklin. Amended claim 1 recites both the connector panel and removable lid are located at the first end of the body tube. Claim 1 further recites the connector panel is “configured to provide an electrical connection between the at least one piece of rack mounted equipment housed within the interior of the body tube and at least one electrical component that is external to the case when the removable lid is attached to the portion of the first end spaced from the recessed portion.”

Becklin does not disclose a connector panel and removable lid both located at the same end of a body tube, the connector panel being configured provide an electrical connection between an electrical component located in the interior of the case and an electrical component located exterior to the case. If one of the lids (16 or 18) is secured to the case, the other of the lids secured to the other end must be removed to effect an electrical connection with the electrical components inside the case. In essence, any component of the Becklin device providing an electrical

connection between the interior and exterior of the case cannot be located at the same end of the case as the lid secured thereto. Consequently, Becklin fails to anticipate the invention of claim 1.

Claims 10 and 11 depend from claim 1 and are patentable over Becklin for the same reasons claim 1 is patentable over Becklin. Claims 10-11 also recite additional claim elements not present in claim 1 that further distinguish them from the teachings of Becklin. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 10-11 based on anticipation by Becklin.

Amended claim 8 recites a case having a removable lid configured to be secured on an end and a connector panel on the same end, the connector panel is configured to provide an electrical connection between a piece of rack mounted equipment inside the case and an electrical component located outside the case when the removable lid is secured on the end. As discussed above with respect to claim 1, Becklin does not disclose a connector panel configured to provide such an electrical connection. Instead, Becklin discloses an arrangement wherein if one of the lids (16 or 18) is secured to the case, the other of the lids must be removed to effect an electrical connection with the electrical components inside the case. Therefore, Becklin does not anticipate the invention recited by claim 8 and applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection.

Rejection of Claims 1-3 and 7-9 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,544,751 (Valles)

Claims 1-3 and 7-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,544,751 to Valles. Valles teaches a microwave oven having a meshing microwave door seal. Referring to Figure 1, Valles discloses a power pack (2) having a front side which is recessed relative to the outside surface of the door (3) of the microwave. However, the front side of the power pack (2) is not a connector panel (as recited by claim 1) because it is not configured to provide an electrical connection between a piece of rack mounted equipment housed within the interior of a body tube and an electrical component external to the case. Instead, the front side of the power pack (2) includes conventional controls such as a timer (6) and interlock (7). Valles at

Col. 2, Ins. 49-52. Therefore, Valles does not teach a recessed connector panel. Because Valles does not teach all of the elements recited by Claim 1, Valles fails to anticipate Claim 1 and applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection with respect to Claim 1.

Dependent claims 2, 3, and 7 depend from claim 1 and are patentable over Valles for the same reasons claim 1 is patentable over Valles. Claims 2, 3, and 7 also recite additional claim elements not present in claim 1 that further distinguish them from the teachings of Valles. Therefore, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 2, 3, and 7 based on anticipation by Valles.

Amended claim 8 recites a connector panel “configured to provide an electrical connection between a piece of rack mounted equipment inside the case and an electrical component located outside the case when the removable lid is secured on the end.” As discussed above with respect to claim 1, Valles does not disclose a connector panel configured to provide such an electrical connection. Instead, Valles discloses a power pack (2) with conventional controls such as a timer (6) and interlock (7). Therefore does not anticipate the invention recited by Claim 8 and applicants respectfully request withdrawal of this rejection. Claim 9 depends from claim 8 and is patentable over Valles for the same reasons claim 8 is patentable over Valles. Therefore, applicants also respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claim 9 based on anticipation by Valles.

Rejection of Claims 1-6, 8, and 9 as anticipated by Published U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0113386 (Be)

Claims 1-6, 8, and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Published U.S. Patent Application No. 2002/0113386 filed by Be. Claims 5 and 6 have been cancelled from the application.

Independent Claims 1 and 8 recite a connector panel configured to provide an electrical connection. Be teaches a body bag for bowling bags. Be does not relate to electronics and does not teach any connections of any kind related to electronic components. Because Be does not teach all of the claim elements of independent Claims 1 and 8, Be fails to anticipate these claims.

Dependent Claims 2-4 depend from claim 1 and dependent claim 9 depends from claim 8. All of these dependent claims recite additional claim elements not present in the independent claim from which they depend that further distinguish dependent claims 2-4 and 9 from the teachings of Be. Because Be fails to anticipate Claims 1-4, 8, and 9, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of Claims 1-4, 8, and 9 based on anticipation by Be.

Rejection of Claim 10 as unpatentable over Peterson et al. in view of Becklin.

Claim 10 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Peterson et al. in view of Becklin. Claim 10 depends from claim 1. As described above, neither Peterson et al. nor Becklin teaches a connector panel and removable lid both secured to the same end of a body tube, connector panel being configured to provide an electrical connection between the at least one piece of rack mounted equipment housed within the interior of the body tube and at least one electrical component that is external to the case when the removable lid is attached.

Combining the references does not render the invention of claim 10 obvious because such a combination would not produce the invention of claim 10. As explained above, if the door (34) of the Peterson et al. device is closed, the conventional electronic musical instrument controls cannot be accessed and the purpose of the electrical communication between the control panel and the housing (50) is rendered moot. Further, the petal board stored in the case is not powered while it is located inside the case. Doing so is nonsensical because the petals of the petal board could not be actuated inside the case. Consequently, one of ordinary skill would not modify the Peterson et al. case to include the connector panel recited by claim 1.

Becklin includes no structures (other than an opening) for effecting electrical connections. Instead, Becklin teaches a case for housing electronic instruments and all coupling between these instruments and the case are mechanical in nature. All of the electrical components are contained within the instruments themselves. To power or connect to the instruments, the case includes one or more open ends (accessed by removing one of the lids) through which power supplies or connecting wires may be coupled to the instruments. Consequently, Becklin provides

no teaching with respect to a connector panel configured to provide an electrical connection between electrical components inside and outside the case. The Becklin case also requires the removal of the lid from the end of the case through which electrical connections are established. Therefore, Becklin does not teach a connector panel and removable lid secured to the same end of the case. Therefore, because neither Peterson et al., Becklin, nor a combination thereof provide any teachings with respect to these claim elements, these references do not render the invention of claim 10 obvious.

New claims 12-14 recite elements that are not disclosed by any of the references cited and cannot be obtained by any combination thereof. Specifically, claims 12-14 recite a connector panel configured to provide an electrical connection between the interior of the case and the exterior of the case. As described above with respect to other claims, this element is not taught by either the individual references cited or combinations thereof. Consequently, new claims 12-14 are in condition for allowance.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the subject application and its allowance are kindly requested. The applicants have made a good faith effort to place all claims in condition for allowance. If questions remain regarding the present application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at (206) 628-7739.

Respectfully submitted,
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